

REMARKS

The Application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated March 13, 2003. Claims 67, 69 and 71 to 75 have been cancelled herein, without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter, and without conceding the correctness of their rejections. Claims 66, 68 and 70 remain in the application, all of which are independent claims, and all of which have been amended. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

In the Office Action, Claims 66 to 75 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over allegedly admitted prior art in the specification. Specifically, the Office Action deemed inherent that service centers, service providers and users would have telephones or fax machines, and that ordinary telephones and fax machines are considered terminals connected to a network. Additionally, the Office Action maintained that the claimed mathematical calculations could be performed by a calculator. Further reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested.

The invention relates to the provision of a plurality of services over a network, in which a request is transmitted from a user terminal to a service center for printing an image which is stored on a network. The service center stores items and their prices in a first table, and stores a plurality of service providers and at least one item included in each type of printing provided by each of the service providers in a second table. The service center calculates a charge relating to the request, by referring to the first and second tables. A notice of the calculated charge is sent from the service center to the user terminal. The request is automatically forwarded from the service center to an

appropriate service provider via the network automatically upon receipt by the service center of an instruction from the user terminal based on the calculated charge.

Referring specifically to the claims, independent Claim 66 describes a method of providing a plurality of services over a network, including the steps of transmitting, by a user terminal, a request to a service center for printing an image stored on the network. The service center stores items and their prices in a first table, and stores a plurality of service providers and at least one item included in each type of printing provided by each one of the plurality of service providers, in a second table. The service center calculates a charge related to the request by referring to the first and second tables. A notification is sent from the service center to the user terminal, the notification including the charge calculated in the calculating step, and the request is forwarded from the service center to an appropriate service provider via the network automatically upon receipt by the service center of an instruction from the user terminal based on the calculated charge. The appropriate service provider performs printing of the image according to the request received from the service center.

Independent Claim 68 describes a system of providing a plurality of services over a network, including a user terminal for transmitting a request to a service center for printing an image stored on the network, a plurality of service providers. The service center is for storing items and their prices in a first table, storing a plurality of service providers and at least one item included in each type of printing provided by each one of the plurality of service providers, in a second table, and calculating a charge related to the request by referring to the first and second tables. The service center sends a notification to the user terminal, the notification including the calculated charge, and forwards the request from the service center to an appropriate service provider via the network automatically

upon receipt by the service center of an instruction from the user terminal based on the calculated charge. The appropriate service provider performs printing of the image according to the request received from the service center.

Independent Claim 70 describes a service center apparatus for managing a plurality of services provided over a network, including a reception means for receiving a request for printing an image stored on the network, from a user terminal via the network, a first storage means for storing items and their prices, and a second storage means for storing a plurality of service providers and at least one item included in each type of printing provided by each one of the plurality of service providers. A calculation means calculates a charge related to the request by referring to the first and second storage means, and a notification means sends a notification to the user terminal, the notification including the charge calculated by the calculation means. A transmission means transmits the request to an appropriate service provider via the network automatically upon receipt of an instruction from the user terminal based on the calculated charge.

Among its many features, the invention (i) calculates, by the service center, a charge related to a request by referring to a first table, which stores items and their prices, and a second table, which stores a plurality of service providers and at least one item included in each type of printing provided by each one of the plurality of service providers, (ii) sends a notification from the service center to the user terminal, the notification including the calculated charge, and (iii) forwards the request from the service center to an appropriate service provider via the network automatically upon receiving a return instruction from the user terminal.

The allegedly admitted prior art is not seen to disclose or to suggest the foregoing features of independent Claims 66, 68 or 70. More particularly, the allegedly

admitted prior art is merely seen to disclose a service center, service provider and users which communicate via ordinary telephones and fax machines, and in which the operators perform mathematical calculations using calculators. However, if telephones, facsimile machines and calculators were used to provide the service of printing images stored on a network, some operation by an operator or a user would be necessary to forward the printing request, and the charge calculation would not be performed by a service center, but instead by a person. In contrast, the present invention performs these operations without the need for an operator at the service center.

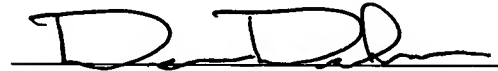
In this regard, the allegedly admitted prior art in no way is seen to disclose the features that the invention (i) calculates, by the service center (not by an operator), a charge related to a request by referring to a first table, which stores items and their prices, and a second table, which stores a plurality of service providers and at least one item included in each type of printing provided by each one of the plurality of service providers, (ii) sends a notification from the service center to the user terminal, the notification including the calculated charge, and (iii) forwards the request from the service center to an appropriate service provider via the network automatically (not by an operator) upon receiving a return instruction from the user terminal.

Accordingly, amended independent Claims 66, 68 and 70 are believed to be in condition for allowance.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, and no other matters being raised in the Office Action, the entire application is believed to be in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested at the Examiner's earliest convenience.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa,
California office at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should continue to be directed to
our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



Attorney for Applicants

Registration No. 40,595

FITZPATRICK, CELLA, HARPER & SCINTO
30 Rockefeller Plaza
New York, New York 10112-2200
Facsimile: (212) 218-2200

CA_MAIN 65174 v 1